(b) if so, the action proposed by Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Government is receiving reports of closure and loss of jobs of export units especially in labour intensive sectors such as handicrafts, marine products, textiles, leather and leather products and plantations;

(b) To ensure that the job losses in these sectors are minimized, Government announced a set of measures aimed at providing relief to the exporters. These include reduction in the interest rate on pre shipment and post shipment credit, increase in drawback, and DEPB rates, a select set of services for refund/exemption of service taxes, interest on certain EEFC balances and increasing the list of products under Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojna and also raising the revenue ceiling under the Scheme by Rs. 300 crores, aaccelerated reimbursement of terminal excise duty and central sales tax to exporters, provision of payment of interest for delays in re-imbursement of Terminal Excise Duty and Central Sales Tax. It is expected that these measures would, to some extent, neutralize the impact of rupee appreciation.

Status of Doha round of talks

1650. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of the Doha round of talks on International Trade; and

(b) when and where the next round of talks are likely to be held?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations on Agriculture, Non Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), Services and other areas are being held in accordance with the mandate contained in the Doha Ministerial Declaration of 2001; the Framework Agreement of July, 2004; and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration of December, 2005. On 17 July 2007, the Chairmen of the WTO's Committee on Agriculture (Special Session) and the Negotiating Group on Market Access brought out Draft Modalities on Agriculture and NAMA respectively. Multilateral discussions on the two Draft Modalities texts are being held since September 2007. The current Round of talks are likely to continue for a further period of time.

Unfair treatment to crops like apple at WTO

1651. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have noted that crops like apple do not receive fair treatment during World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations;

(b) whether it is a fact that Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) between India and neighbouring countries is harming Indian apple farmers' interests;